

NEWBORN SCREENING FOR CRITICAL CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE (CCHD)

Congenital heart disease is the most common birth defect affecting about 8 in every 1000 babies born. Some forms of congenital heart disease can be found when examined by the baby's health care provider. However, sometimes the baby won't show signs of a problem until they are more affected. The screening is done to find these before symptoms develop. Not all forms of heart disease can be detected by the newborn screening test for CCHD, but the screen increases the chance of early detection for 7 of the most serious forms of congenital heart disease. The screening test for CCHD involves placing a pulse oximeter on your baby's foot and hand.



Photo Courtesy Massimo

A simple painless test, measures the amount of oxygen in the blood and the heart rate. Babies with low levels of oxygen in their blood should get further evaluation. The screening test should be done at 24 hours of age or shortly thereafter. Babies who are sent home without the screening who have undetected CCHD can suffer serious brain and other organ damage or even die when deprived of oxygen. Catching CCHD early means you can help prevent these problems and get treatment for your baby to correct the heart defect. Be sure to ask your baby's doctor about the results of her/his screening test for CCHD before you leave the hospital.

For More Information on CRITICAL CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE SCREENING:

Talk to your baby's doctor or other health care provider. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has a good web-site at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/pediatricgenetics/cchdscreening.html>